

# University Sales Center Alliance Certification Program Assists Students, Companies

By **Ramon A. Avila, Ph.D.**

*(Editor's Note: This is the second of a two-part series)*

In the last issue of *BizVoice*®, we discussed the tremendous improvements that have taken place in helping prepare students for sales careers. One of those initiatives was the formation of the University Sales Center Alliance (USCA). The mission is to advance the sales profession through academic leadership in sales education, research and outreach.

In September of 2002, faculty members from nine universities (Ball State, Baylor, Illinois State, Kennesaw State, Northern Illinois, Ohio, Akron, Houston and Toledo) formed the USCA. One of its first goals was to establish a professional sales certification program for students interested in pursuing a career in sales.

Building on a similar certification created by Buddy LaForge, Ph.D., professor of marketing at the University of Louisville, the USCA developed the Certified Sales Student (CSS) program. The objective of the program is two-fold. First, it provides students with a road map telling them how to best prepare for successful sales careers, while also allowing them to receive recognition for going beyond minimal course requirements. Second, by recognizing exceptional commitment and achievement, the certification program provides recruiters from around the world an objective means to easily identify the best candidates for sales positions.

Interested students must earn a minimum of 100 total points to be awarded the Certified Sales Student designation. Further, at least 50 points must be earned through the coursework requirements section and another 50 points (minimum) must be earned through the extracurricular experience requirements section.

## Coursework requirements (50 points)

To be counted toward the CSS designation, participants must complete the required and elective coursework and earn a minimum grade of "B" in each class.

### Certification Requirements

Courses	(50 points)
Personal/Professional Selling (3 credit hours)	20 points

*In addition to the required course in Personal/Professional Selling, a minimum of three of the following courses must be completed.*

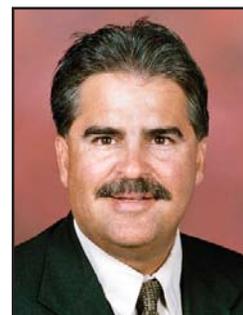
Advanced Personal Selling (3 credit hours)	10 points
Sales Negotiation (3 credit hours)	10 points
Sales Management (3 credit hours)	10 points
Business to Business Marketing (3 credit hours)	10 points
Organizational Purchasing (3 credit hours)	10 points
Independent Study in Personal Selling (3 credit hours)	10 points
Other Accredited Courses in Selling (3 credit equivalent)	10 points

## Extracurricular experience requirements (50 points)

Any combination of the following activities and experiences that totals a minimum of 50 points must be completed toward the

CSS designation. The points associated with any listed activity can only be counted once toward the CSS (i.e., working two summers in a sales position can only be counted for 20 points, not 40 points). The specific activities and experiences in each listed category of activity must be identified and approved in advance by the sales professor responsible for the student's application and certification.

Upon completion of each applicable activity, the student must prepare a short written report describing what was done and what was learned from the activity. These reports should become a part of the student's portfolio.



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### Certification Requirements

Extracurricular Experience	(50 points)
Sales internship/co-op/selling job (minimum one-semester equivalent)	20 points
Active member of a College of Business professional student organization (e.g., Pi Sigma Epsilon) (one year minimum)	10 points
Service as Executive Officer in a College of Business professional student organization	10 points
Participation in organization/commercial sales training program	10 points
Shadow salesperson or sales manager for a day	10 points
Interact with sales mentor for one semester	10 points
Read and report on an approved personal selling or sales management book (excluding course textbooks)	10 points
Attend two meetings of professional sales organizations (e.g. Sales and Marketing Executives International)	10 points
Participate in collegiate level sales competition (e.g., National Collegiate Sales Competition)	10 points

## Expanding its efforts

The USCA has established a web site ([www.salescenteralliance.net](http://www.salescenteralliance.net)) that serves sales recruiters and sales students. In addition, the USCA will be conducting research regarding the relative success of students in sales careers. Finally, it is developing awards that will recognize top faculty members and sales students nationally.

### INFORMATION LINK

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